

Rhodora

JOURNAL OF

THE NEW ENGLAND BOTANICAL CLUB

Vol. 27.

May, 1925.

No. 317.

EDWARD BLANCHARD CHAMBERLAIN.

CLARENCE H. KNOWLTON.

EDWARD BLANCHARD CHAMBERLAIN, son of Charles Edwin and Margaret J. (Blanchard) Chamberlain, was born in Bristol, Maine, July 24, 1878. Here his father was postmaster and proprietor of the village store. Both parents had been teachers, and he received most of his early education at home, where his attention was often turned to the interesting things of the natural world around them. He prepared for college at Lincoln Academy, Newcastle, Maine, where the principal, J. E. Dinsmore, was a stimulating amateur botanist.

Mr. Chamberlain entered Bowdoin College in the fall of 1895, following in the footsteps of his father, who was graduated there in 1868. He became a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. He was much influenced by Prof. Leslie A. Lee, an old-time all-around scientist, and took most of the scientific courses offered by the college. At graduation in 1899 he led his class, and became a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He then went to Brown University for two years as a graduate student and instructor in botany, receiving his degree of A. M. there in 1901. As his father had died during his college course, his mother went with him to Providence for these two years. Later she made her home among her own people at Cumberland Center, Maine.

The life work which Mr. Chamberlain entered upon was teaching in secondary schools. His first position, for one year only, was at Oak Grove Seminary, Vassalboro, Maine. He taught in the University School (for boys) in Washington, D. C., from 1902 to 1906; since then he has been a teacher in the Franklin School (for boys)

in New York City, where he taught till three days before his death. His teaching was mainly college preparatory science and mathematics, and he was very successful in it. He was also a strong man in the organization of the school, becoming senior master, "a most self-sacrificing and devoted member of its teaching staff," as one of his associates wrote of him. In recent years he has served as a reader in mathematics for the College Entrance Examination Board.

After the death of his parents Mr. Chamberlain made his summer home with his cousin, Mr. Henry H. Chamberlain, at Round Pond (Bristol), Maine. Here he lived a most lively existence, lending an active hand about the farm work, and building up his health and strength for the winter months in the city. He was most systematic in planning his life from day to day, and most conscientious in attention to details.

He was one of the original members of the Josselyn Botanical Society of Maine, and for many years he was an officer and an attendant at its meetings. To have known "Ed" on a field excursion was to have known him at his very best. Enthusiastic and a keen observer, he plunged into collecting with all the zest in the world, but he also seemed to feel a responsibility for the others in the party, and constantly went out of his way to assure himself that they were enjoying the trip, and getting their full share of its pleasures. He was most helpful with beginners, showing them what they needed to know, and helping them by word and letter. Withal he was a most cheerful individual on such occasions, mocking at the inconveniences of travel and hostelry, and keeping everyone interested by his characteristic comments.

Mr. Chamberlain became a non-resident member of the New England Botanical Club in 1898. He was a member of the Vermont Botanical Club, and of the Torrey Botanical Club, serving recently as a member of its Field Excursion Committee. When he lived in Washington he became a member of the Washington Biologists' Field Club, and of the Biological Society and Botanical Society there. He belonged to several other such societies, for his interest in science was broad. He was also an extensive reader along general scientific lines.

His herbarium of vascular plants was based mostly on the floras of Lincoln and Cumberland Counties in Maine, with some specimens from northern Rhode Island. His interest in this branch of botany

gradually gave way to an intense interest in the mosses, so that in 1921 he gave his carefully mounted specimens to the New England Botanical Club, where they form a valuable addition to the Club Herbarium.

At the Farmington meeting of the Josselyn Botanical Society of Maine in 1896, Mr. Chamberlain met Prof. J. Franklin Collins of Brown, and a year later at the Dover meeting Prof. Collins definitely interested him in the mosses. This friendship led to his graduate work at Brown, where as a part of his labors he identified a large portion of the mosses collected by Prof. Collins on Mt. Katahdin, which several members of the New England Botanical Club visited in 1900. The interest in mosses continued and grew steadily till he became an acknowledged authority on them. It had been Mr. Chamberlain's plan to give up teaching in a year or two, so as to devote himself entirely to scientific study, and he had thought seriously of doing so last fall. He had collected a remarkably fine and complete library of bryological lore, as well as a very large moss herbarium, and he was looking forward to years of study and classification.

For over ten years he has been the efficient Secretary-Treasurer of the Sullivant Moss Society, and Business Manager of their publication, *The Bryologist*. He corresponded with most of the members and subscribers here and abroad, and worked constantly and faithfully for its interests, often paying minor deficits from his own pocket. Such service as his can not be paid for, it comes from a desire to help others.

This spirit of helpfulness and service was the keynote of Mr. Chamberlain's character. Although he tried to keep himself in the background, it was his underlying motive in life. He was successful in helping others, too, in more ways than can be given here. Relatives, friends, students, and even casual acquaintances, all remember his characteristic ways of speech and writing, and the spirit that was in the man.

Mr. Chamberlain wrote several articles for *RHODORA* in its early days, and has been a frequent contributor to the pages of *The Bryologist*. As a letter-writer he was unexcelled, putting a great deal of himself into what he wrote, and gifted there, as elsewhere, with a strong sense of humor.

During the school year in New York he often took week-end trips in the open country with a small group of men to break the monotony

of teaching, and to reinvigorate him for indoor work. It was thus that he planned his last trip to Bear Mountain to view the total eclipse of the sun on January 24. The temperature was below zero, and he was thoroughly chilled, so that he had a bad cold when he returned. He taught the following week, but gave up on Friday night. Pneumonia developed, and he died quietly on the evening of February 2. He was the only child of his parents and never married, so he left no near relatives, except two aged aunts in the West.

By the terms of his will his library and collections are given to the New England Botanical Club where they will be of very great value to bryological students. His other property was left to Bowdoin College.

HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS.

PONTEDERIA VERSUS UNISEMA.

M. L. FERNALD.

IN recent years the American genus which has long passed as *Pontederia* L. has begun to appear in American botanical literature as *Unisema* Raf., and the common Pickerelweed of eastern America as *Unisema cordata* (L.) Farwell.¹ Since the proposition to relegate the name *Pontederia* to the Asiatic and Australian genus *Monochoria* Presl and to use for the American genus Rafinesque's name *Unisema* is not new and since there are valid arguments both for and against such a procedure it may be clarifying to look into the history of the Linnean genus *Pontederia*. As it appeared in the *Species Plantarum* (1753), *Pontederia*² had three species: (1) *P. ovata* of Malabar, which had been described and illustrated by Rhede, a plant with 1 stamen and consequently included by Linnaeus through error in his *Pontederia*, a genus which he placed in the class *Hexandria*; (2) *P. cordata*, the *Pontederia* of Linnaeus's *Hortus Cliffortianus* (1737), Gronovius's *Flora Virginica* (1739), etc., the Pickerelweed of eastern America, with dense spikes and with 1-seeded indehiscent fruits; and (3) *P. hastata* of India, the *Pontederia* of Linnaeus's *Flora Zeylanica* (1747) or the *Carim gola* of Rhede, a plant with umbels of flowers and with 3-valved many-seeded capsules.

¹ Farwell, Papers Mich. Acad. Sci. Arts and Lett. iii. 91 (1923).

² Sp. Pl. i. 288 (1753).